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WASHINGTON POST
24 December 1984

Australia Faces Nuclear Issue

Opponents Would Close U.S. Bases, Could Affect Defense Treaty

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Washington Post Foreign Service

SYDNEY—After livening up an otherwise dull election this month, Australia's growing antinuclear lobby threatens further trouble for the reelected Labor government of Prime Minister Robert Hawke and possibly for U.S. interests here, according to Australian political analysts.

Among the issues in the recent campaign—and potentially at stake if the antinuclear activists gain strength—were the presence of three key U.S. communications bases in Australia, the mining and export of uranium and port calls by nuclear-armed or nuclear-powered U.S. warships.

Although not mentioned directly as a campaign issue, the ANZUS defense treaty linking Australia, New Zealand and the United States would be affected by any moves against the bases or port calls, according to U.S. officials. They say the alliance has already suffered a setback from the decision of New Zealand's Labor government elected in July to ban all visits by nuclear ships and seek renegotiation of the ANZUS pact to "denuclearize" the alliance.

While two small opposition parties with antinuclear platforms appear to have gained only seven of 76 Senate seats between them, the issue may have contributed to disenchantment among some Labor voters and the shrinkage of the governing party's majority in the more important House of Representatives, political analysts say.

Other fallout from the rise of the antinuclear issue has included the emergence on the political scene of a 31-year-old rock star, Peter Garrett, and reports of a U.S.-Australian diplomatic rift.

The antinuclear issue "probably had more impact on the election than any single issue," said Sen. Donald Chipp, the leader of the Australian Democrats, the other small opposition party. His party appears to have

captured six Senate seats with a platform that included opposition to visits by nuclear warships and to the presence of "foreign bases that contribute to nuclear war" and allegedly make Australia a target for Soviet nuclear attack.

Because of Australia's complicated weighted voting system, final results of the Dec. 1 election are not expected to be known until January. But data now available indicate that Hawke's reelected government will emerge with a 16-seat house majority, down from 25 in the 1982 elections.

Polls before this month's election had predicted a landslide Hawke victory, with an increased majority in the new house. The chamber has 23 new seats, for a total of 148.

Chipp charged that the Hawke government had made Australians "craven puppets" of the United States and its "lying American diplomats" by backing the U.S. position that the warship visits and the communications bases were vital to the survival of ANZUS, which he called "the most useless document in the Australian government archives."

But Chipp also had harsh words for Garrett's Nuclear Disarmament Party, which emerged two months before the election and may have denied the Democrats some gains by splitting the antinuclear vote. Chipp asserted that the party was "simply a front for the communist left."

Garrett, who appears to have narrowly lost his bid for a Senate seat from New South Wales, according to the latest poll data, said Chipp's charge was regrettable and insisted that his party also opposed the Soviet nuclear buildup.

Garrett said the next two years would determine "whether the peoples of the world are prepared to say no to nuclear weapons. That's a decision that has to be made as much by Australians as by anybody else, and we are saying no to the Soviet Union as well as to the United States."

More than 500,000 of Australia's 9 million voters—or about 6 percent of the electorate—cast primary votes for the Nuclear Disarmament Party, electing at least one Senate candidate from Western Australia. Garrett said his party received support from a political cross section of concerned people, including Labor supporters who

"felt betrayed" by the Hawke government's reversal of Labor Party opposition to uranium mining earlier this year and its "total accommodation to U.S. policy."

He said New Zealand's ban on nuclear warships was "a very encouraging sign" for Australians and had served as an impetus for the antinuclear movement here.

The United States and Australia operate three bases officially termed "joint defense facilities" at Pine Gap near Alice Springs in central Australia, at Nurrungar to the south and at North West Cape on the coast of Western Australia.

The Pine Gap and Nurrungar bases receive a variety of data from U.S. satellites that provides early warning of Soviet missile launches and helps to monitor arms control agreements. The North West Cape facility serves as a communications relay station for U.S. Navy ships and submarines.

According to the head of Australia's Center for Strategic Studies, Desmond Ball, the same data received by the Pine Gap and Nurrungar bases to verify arms control agreements also help the United States to plan nuclear strikes in the event of war. The "basic dilemma" for peace groups is that the uses of these data cannot be separated, said Ball, who is regarded as Australia's leading expert on the bases.

"If you think that arms control treaties are important, then you can't close down Pine Gap," Ball said. Nevertheless, the Nuclear Disarmament Party wants to do just that, insisting that the United

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